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Report Name: National Food Safety Standard Edible Starch Finalized

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Post: Beijing

Report Category: FAIRS Subject Report, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, Grain and Feed, Potatoes and Potato Products, WTO Notifications

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Report Highlights:

On March 27, 2025, China's National Health Commission (NHC) and the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) jointly released the National Food Safety Standard Edible Starch (GB 31637-2025). The updated final standard applies to edible starch products produced and sold in China, and it will enter into force on March 16, 2026. China notified the draft standard to the WTO on March 8, 2021. This report provides unofficial translation of the final standard. Stakeholders should conduct their own review of the regulation.

FAS China provides this analysis and reporting as a service to the United States agricultural community, and to our farmers, ranchers, rural communities, and agribusiness operations in support of a worldwide agricultural information system and a level playing field for U.S. agriculture.

Summary:

On March 27, 2025, China's National Health Commission (NHC) and the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) jointly released the National Food Safety Standard Edible Starch (GB 31637-2025) (link in Chinese).

On March 8, 2021, China notified the draft National Food Safety Standard Edible Starch to the WTO under G/SPS/N/CHN/1204. This standard applies to all edible starch products produced and sold in China. The final standard will enter into force on March 16, 2026 and will replace the current implementing standard of GB 31637-2016 which entered into force in June 2017.

Compared with the current version, the updated standard made the following major changes:

- Revised definitions and specified categories for edible starch under Article 2;
- Included specific physical and chemical indicators of water content for categories of starch products and added new indicator for hydrocyanic acid in Table 2;
- Removed microbial requirements for total bacterial count and coliform groups for the finished products.

This report provides an unofficial translation of the final standard. Stakeholders should conduct their own review of the regulation.

BEGIN TRANSLATION

National Food Safety Standard

Edible Starch

Foreword

The Standard replaces GB 31637-2016 the National Food Safety Standard Edible Starch.

When compared with GB 31637-2016, the standard mainly has following changes:

- Modified terminology and definitions;
- Modified the water content limits;
- Added a specification for hydrocyanic acid;
- Removed total bacterial count and coliform group indicators.

National Food Safety Standard

Edible Starch

1 Scope

The standard applies to edible starch.

2 Terms and Definitions

2.1 Edible Starch

Native starch extracted through physical methods from edible cereals, tubers, legumes, or other edible plants, or edible modified starches in which no new chemical groups are introduced, and the glycosidic bonds remain unchanged (including pregelatinized starch, heat-moisture treated starch, porous starch, and soluble starch, etc.).

2.2 Native Starch Categories

2.2.1 Gramineous cereal starch

Edible starch extracted from gramineous cereal crops (e.g., corn, wheat, rice) that has not been modified.

2.2.2 Tuber starch

Edible starch extracted from tuber crops (e.g., potato, cassava, sweet potato, yam, taro, lotus root) that has not been modified.

2.2.3 Legume starch

Edible starch extracted from legumes (e.g., peas, mung beans, fava beans) that has not been modified.

2.2.4 Other starch

Edible starch extracted from other types of plants that has not been modified.

2.3 Modified Starch Categories

2.3.1 Pregelatinized starch

Edible modified starch processed through drum drying, spray drying, extrusion drying, etc., exhibiting significant swelling or gelatinous dispersion characteristics when it is in contact with cold water, without introducing new chemical groups or changing glycosidic bonds.

2.3.2 Other modified starches

Other edible modified starches processed through physical or enzymatic treatments, without introducing new chemical groups or altering glycosidic bonds, such as heat-moisture treated starch, porous starch, and soluble starch.

3 Technical Requirements

3.1 Raw Material Requirements

Raw materials must comply with applicable food standards and regulations.

3.2 Sensory Requirements

Sensory requirements shall comply with the provisions in Table 1.

Table 1: Sensory Requirements

Item	Requirements	Testing Method
Color	White or similar to white, no abnormal color	Take appropriate amount of sample and put it in a clean, dry white plate (porcelain plate or similar container), observe its color and status under natural light, and smell it.
Odor	Product-specific smell, no abnormal odor	
Status	Powder or granules (pregelatinized starch may be flaky) and no visible foreign object	

3.3 Physical and Chemical Indicators

The physical and chemical indicators shall comply with the provisions in Table 2.

Table 2: Physical and Chemical Indicators

Item		Indicator	Test Method
Water Content (g/100g)			GB 5009.3
Native Starch			
- Gramineous cereal starch	≤	14.0	
- Tuber starch:			
Cassava starch	≤	15.0	
Sweet potato starch	≤	17.0	
Potato starch	≤	20.0	

Lotus root starch	≤	13.0	
Other tuber starches	≤	18.0	
- Legume starch	≤	15.0	
- Other starches	≤	18.0	
Modified Starch			
- Pregelatinized starch	≤	12.0	
Hydrocyanic acid [a] (mg/kg)	≤	10.0	GB 5009.36
[a] only applicable to cassava starch			

3.4 Contaminant Limits

The limits of contaminants shall comply with provisions of GB 2762[1].

3.5 Microbiological Limits

The microbiological limits shall comply with the provisions in Table 3.

Table 3: Microbiological Limits

Item	Sampling Plan [a] and Limit	Testing Method
Molds and yeasts/ (CFU/g) ≤	10^3	GB 4789.15
[a] Sampling collection and treatment shall be conducted in accordance with GB 4789.1		

3.6 Food Additives and Nutritional Fortification Substances

3.6.1 Use of food additives shall comply with provisions of GB 2760[2].

3.6.2 Use of food nutritional fortification substances shall comply with provisions of GB 14880[3].

END TRANSALTION

Attachments:

GB 31637-2025 Edible Starch.pdf

[1] National Food Safety Standard Maximum Levels of Contaminants in Foods (GB2762-2022)
[2] National Food Safety Standard Usage Standard for Food Additives (GB2760-2024)
[3] National Food Safety Standard Use of Nutritional Fortification Substances (GB14880-2012)